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EPISODE IN THE PENINSULAR WAR.

It was in the month of January, 1809. Spain, which was invaded by the French, and defended by the English, had become the scene of a struggle that was growing more deadly in its character every succeeding day. After having beaten the Spaniards on all points, Marshal Soult had just attacked Sir John Moore, and forced him to retire upon Corunna. Several detachments commanded by the English general had been separated from each other during the precipitate retreat, and the baggage guards, cut off by the incessant attacks of the French, detached in small parties along the highroads, were endeavouring to rejoin the main body of the army.

At the period we refer to, one of these parties, consisting of four or five waggons and a number of wounded, was winding its way along a toilsome and unknown road. It was under the command of an Irish sergeant named Patrick Maguire.

It was beginning to grow dark, and the heavens, which were covered with dull heavy clouds, announced the approach of a storm. The country through which it was advancing was bleak and desolate, without a single village or the slightest sign of cultivation to enliven the sombre scene around. The only objects which showed that human beings had ever inhabited the dreary waste, were here and there a deserted house, whose doors and shutters had been burnt for the fire of some bivouac, a few horses which had sunk down dead from fatigue, a few corpses, and the various other traces which an army in the field leaves on its passage.

After carefully examining these indications, Maguire was convinced that the troops who had preceded him on the road formed part of the French army; this caused him to fear that it would only be with the utmost difficulty that he should succeed in rejoining Sir John Moore. His companions, most of whom were wounded, could hardly drag themselves along, and the state of discouragement into which they had fallen was aggravated still more by their impatience.

It was in this state of mind that they reached an open space, where the remains of extinguished fires, and some baggage which had been abandoned, proved that troops had recently bivouacked there.

The narrow piece of table-land, on which the French had been encamped, was bordered on one side by a tolerably deep ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a small stream. The murmuring of the water attracted several of the wounded soldiers, who were parched with thirst, and who expressed a desire to descend the ravine in order to drink. Maguire halted for the purpose of assisting his wounded comrades, but, on approaching the edge of the bank, he perceived, in the bed of the stream, a dead mule still harnessed to a cart, from under the canvas of which he thought he heard a human voice. He slid down to the bottom of the ravine, and, pushing aside the hoops which supported the covering of the cart, perceived a woman, who begged for assistance in Spanish.

The sergeant understood the language slightly, and inquired of her how she came there. The unhappy creature informed him that she had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue, and trusted to the instinct of her mule, who, in all probability, having gone too near the edge of the precipice to graze, had fallen down the ravine and dragged the cart with him. She had awoke at the instant of the fall, which she was unable to prevent, and had remained in her perilous position for some time, completely unconscious from the effects of the injuries she had received. On recovering her senses, all her efforts to disengage herself had been in vain, and it was entirely owing to the sergeant that she had been rescued.

While listening to this explanation, Maguire, assisted by his comrades, had succeeded in raising the woman, whose limbs had become completely numbed with pain; and, in drawing her out from the shattered fragments of the cart, by the last remaining rays of daylight, he recognised her by her costume for a vivandière of the French army.

At this discovery, the good feeling of Maguire's comrades was suddenly changed to a sentiment of rage, and exclamations of a menacing kind were heard on all sides.

Having been summoned to defend Spain against the French, the soldiers of Sir John Moore were accustomed to look upon every native of that country who joined the invaders as a traitor. They were especially incensed against those women, who, sacrificing their patriotism to their personal affection, had united their lot to that of the French, and had resolved to follow Marshal Soult's army, and share with it all the privations and chances of war. This was exactly the case of the Vivandière Dolores, who had married a grenadier of the first division.

The small band of fugitives expressed, in very energetic terms, their regret at having extricated a vivandière of the enemy's troops from her dangerous position, and some of them were on the point of proceeding, from mere invective, to personal violence, when Sergeant Maguire interposed his authority.

"Come, come, we have had talkin' enough," he said, in a resolute voice, placing himself before Dolores. "Ye're not come to make war on women are ye? Don't yez think that this poor crathur is punished enough by the choice she has made? Git along wid yez, thin, and let every one be contented with looking afthur himself alone, if he wants to git out o' this safe and sound."

This piece of advice was followed by the command for the waggons to set out once again on the journey, and those who were most incensed against Dolores left her to obey the order.

Maguire waited until they had set off at the head of the party, and then, when there was no one with him, save some women and some soldiers of his own company, he turned towards the vivandière, who had seated herself, in a weak and suffering state, near her broken cart.

"What will become o' ye at the bottom of this hole?" he asked, in a voice whose rough tones were tempered with pity.

"Heaven alone knows!" answered Dolores.

"Do you feel yer'self strong enough to walk?" he continued.

"I think I do," answered Dolores; "but where can I go alone, and at this hour? The roads are thronged with your troops, and I have just seen what treatment I have to expect at their hands."

The sergeant seemed to hesitate for a moment; then, taking a sudden resolution, he replied:—

"Come, get up, and folly us; as long as I carry a musket on my shoulder, sorra a hair o' yer head 'ill be touched."

Dolores thanked the sergeant with heartfelt gratitude, and exerting all the little strength she had remaining, followed, in the extreme rear, the waggons.

At first she did not appear to know in what direction the party was proceeding; but, at the expiration of a short time, she approached Maguire, and in a low voice, filled with surprise, said to him:—

"Sergeant, do you know where you are going?"

"Of coorse I do," replied the soldier, "we are goin' to the English encampment."

"The English encampment!" repeated the vivandière, looking at him with astonishment.

"And I hope," continued the sergeant, "that we'll be able to come up to it before the battle comes off."

"What!" exclaimed Dolores, seizing him by the arm, "do you not know that the battle has already been fought, and—lost on the sixteenth?"

"By Sir John Moore?" said the sergeant.

"Yes;" replied Dolores, "by Sir John Moore, who was killed. His troops have now reached the coast with the view of shortly embarking."

Maguire stood suddenly still.

"On your life, woman, I charge ye to say whether ye're desavin' me!"

"On my life and on my soul, I am telling you the truth," continued Dolores, with such an accent of sincerity that doubt was impossible. "Several detachments, which, like yourselves, were marching as they imagined to rejoin the English army, have fallen into the hands of the French posts; if you proceed in your present line of march, in a few hours you will all be prisoners."

Dolores added several particulars, so minute and precise, concerning the plan of the action, and the various localities occupied by Marshal Soult's troops, that Maguire saw clearly the whole danger of his position. Luckily his conversation with the vivandière had been carried on in Spanish, so that his comrades had not understood it. Knowing that the intelligence of such a reverse would give the finishing blow to their state of discouragement, he charged Dolores not to let them suspect anything, and then ordered a trooper to gallop on to the first waggon and order the driver to turn sharply to the right in order to reach the sea by the shortest possible route.

Although this new line of march seemed to take them

"Holloa! Williams!" he exclaimed, "look sharp! stop the waggon and make room for one in it!"

"What! for that daughter of Satan?" said the corporal.

"For a Christian woman at the point of death," answered the sergeant. "Haven't ye anny pity in your heart?"

"Never, when I am exposed to danger," replied the corporal. "In my opinion, when you have conquered an enemy, the best thing you can do is to kill him."

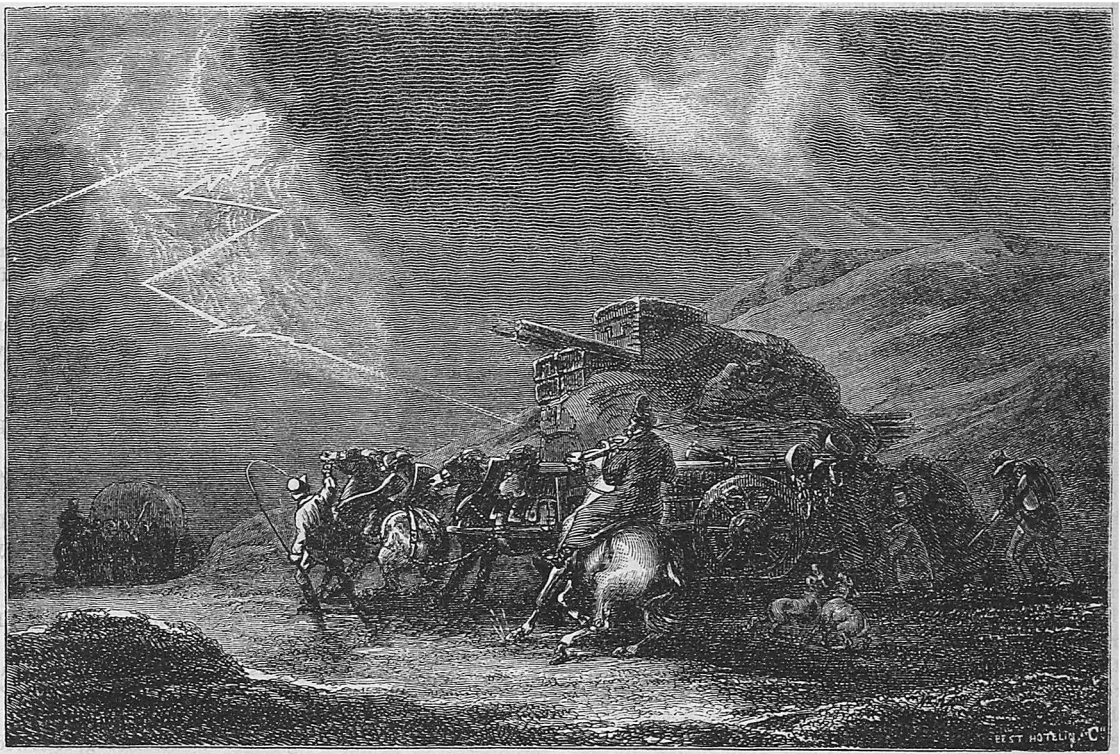
"No mathur what *your* opinion is, do what I have ordered you!" answered Maguire, sternly.

The corporal obeyed with a very bad grace, and helped to place the vivandière in the waggon. She met with anything but a hospitable welcome from the women and the wounded soldiers already there.

"How long have the baggage-waggons of the King of England been used to transport traitors that aid the French?" asked several voices.

"Throw her under the wheels!" "Down with the false-hearted quean!" cried several others.

Maguire made no reply, but placed Dolores, who had by



THE BAGGAGE GUARD IN THE STORM.

farther away from the main body of the English army, yet, as it brought the fugitives nearer to Corunna, where they might expect everything of which they stood in need, as well as a safe place of refuge, most of the party obeyed the order without raising any very great objection. The vivandière alone stood still. Besides the fact of this new line of march placing a still greater distance between her and the French camp, her strength was completely exhausted, so that, after saying that she could go no further, she sat down on the roadside in a fainting state. Maguire looked embarrassed.

"Confound it!" said he, making the butt-end of his musket ring upon the ground, "we might as well have left you in the lurch then. What will you do when we're gone?"

"I do not know," replied Dolores, whose thoughts began to wander, and who could hardly speak.

"But if you remain here," continued Maguire, with a rough but kindly voice, "you will die like a wounded wolf."

"And if I do—after my death, Heaven will avenge me," she stammered out, falling back on the ground.

Maguire raised her up again, and called to the corporal.

this time fainted, in a sort of recess formed by the baggage, whence she could not be thrown by the jolting of the waggon.

The party was traversing a very wild country, intersected with rocky eminences, where, as was the case in nearly all Spain, no regular road had ever been marked out, and the only way-marks to guide the traveller were the ruts and the tracks left by the feet of cattle. The sun had completely disappeared. The darkness, increased still more by the sombre clouds that covered the sky, was so dense that it was scarcely possible to distinguish the outlines of the cumbersome waggons. In an hour's time, however, the storm, which had long been threatening, broke forth in all its force. The rolling of the thunder, which was at first relieved by solemn pauses, soon became incessant; torrents of rain, through which the forked-lightnings flashed, fell like one large water-spout, inundating the heights, submerging the low ground, and changing the dry, powdery soil into one large ocean of mud. The horses, frightened by the lightning and the unusual noise, reared up under their drivers' whips; the jaded soldiers in vain sought refuge behind the waggons; their position was becoming

more critical every moment. At last it stopped at the top of a very rapid descent, and the sergeant looked with inquietude around.

The veil of rain which covered the heavens was so thick that it did not allow even the lightnings to illuminate the road; their brilliancy, dimmed by the thick mist, showed only a number of confused forms and uncertain outlines, which inspired every one with a vague idea of danger without giving him an opportunity of knowing in what it really consisted. After having in vain examined the horizon, and reconnoitred the descent before him, the sergeant was about to give the word of command for the convoy to proceed, when a scream, that issued from the last waggon, caused him to start with horror.

Dolores had been revived by the rain, and had raised herself up on the baggage. When the sergeant turned round, she was leaning forward, with her head advanced and her arms extended, pointing with affright to the descent, at the top of which the party had stopped.

"In the name of Heaven!" she cried to Maguire, "do not advance another step, unless you are tired of life!"

"Why, where does the road lade to?" asked the sergeant.

"To the *Devil's Gulf*!" replied Dolores.

"Are you quite sure?" said the sergeant.

"Listen!" replied Dolores.

Maguire waited for one of those momentary pauses, in which the fury of the storm was lulled, and then, listening attentively, heard the hoarse noise made by the water collected on the hills dashing down into the abyss. He rushed, terror-stricken, to the heads of the horses, whom he compelled to fall back. His comrades, who had heard the rushing of the waters as well as himself, regained precipitately the table-land.

The storm continued to rage with the same awful violence, and despair was rapidly obtaining possession of the whole party. The sergeant himself, whose commands were no longer respected, did not know what plan to pursue. Some of the drivers took out the horses, in order to get on their backs, and fly, at hazard, through the night. At length Dolores stood up in the waggon, and pointing to an opening in the hills on the right hand, exclaimed:—

"There lies your road. Follow the side of the hill, until you come to the next open space; you will then see Corunna at your feet, and in two hours you will be in safety."

Her words, translated by Maguire, put an end to the general disorder and somewhat revived the drooping courage of the fugitives. The waggon in which Dolores rode took the head of the procession, while she herself directed the march, telling the drivers how to avoid the ravines and turn the rocks. At length the storm abated; the clouds, swept away by the wind from the sea, disappeared in the distance, and the sky, spangled with stars, was once more visible.

The party now reached the open space mentioned by Dolores, and a little further on they perceived the town and the roads, with the men-of-war bearing the English colours at their mast-heads.

Every one forgot his sufferings to greet the well-loved flag with a joyous hurrah!

"We have had a hard time of it, sergeant," said the corporal, approaching Maguire, "but we have escaped at last!"

"Thanks to that poor woman," said the Irishman, pointing to the vivandière; "ye see, corporal, that pity is not so bad an adviser afthurr all, and that it is often wiser to save than to kill an inimy."

THE KING'S-CROSS TERMINUS, LONDON.

THE completion of a great trunk-line, connecting the metropolis by a direct route with the Midland and Northern districts of England, opening up railway communication with vast and unoccupied districts, and giving increased facilities and a shorter course from London to the most important manufacturing and agricultural counties, is an event of national importance. And when it is further remembered, that the undertaking has been accomplished by the combined energies of enterprise and skill, and has been completed in its minutest details, by the aid of all the experience which has been accumulated during the formation of some five or six thousand miles of railway in Great Britain alone, it will be seen that there are some features of interest attaching to the Great Northern Railway which will not be found elsewhere. To the traveller or the tourist who may avail himself of the facilities which this line affords, it will be no small satisfaction to know that in its construction, whether in its more important characteristics, or in its least significant peculiarities, there has been manifested a vigour of conception, and an energy of execution, which promises, if the affairs of the line be properly and efficiently administered, to satisfy, and even surpass every reasonable claim. We have only to hope that there will be as much of ability shown in the arrangements of the working of this system of railway, as there has been exhibited in its formation.

The metropolitan terminus of the Great Northern Railway, is, in every respect worthy of the gigantic undertaking of which it forms so conspicuous a feature; and to a description of some of its arrangements we have now to invite the attention of the reader. The structures are already rapidly approaching completion in their minutest details, and when all are finished, will form one of the most interesting spots in the metropolis.

The station is situated in the parish of St. Pancras, on the northern and southern sides of the Regent's canal, by which it is severed into two distinct portions, one of which is appropriated to the passenger, the other to the goods' department.

It is built close to the junction of five of the principal highways of London, which, favoured by its central position, afford singular facilities for reaching and leaving it. The total area occupied by the station, including the additional land, which has been secured in order to admit of enlargement as the exigencies of the traffic require, amounts to no less than from seventy to eighty acres.

The grand entrance to the terminus has a north-western frontage, and is a large and elegant building, built of brick, and faced with stone, abutting on the Old St. Pancras-road, and with much the same aspect as the rears of the old Smallpox and London Fever Hospitals, which it has supplanted. This building, including the parcels'-office, at the extreme northern end, is 805 feet in length, and upwards of seventy feet in height. Its centre compartment contains the pay-office, and the avenues leading to the departure platform of the railway. The length of the room designed as the pay-offices is a hundred feet, it is forty feet in width, and forty-five in height, occupying rather more than two stories in the height of the building north and south of it, and communicating by a stone gallery running through the hall, supported upon thirty-four large and very elegant brackets, and having a light and unique Gothic railing. It has a rich panelled ceiling, somewhat in the style of that of the large waiting-hall of the terminus of the London and North-Western Railway at Euston-square. The arrangements of the pay-offices are completed in the best manner.

Adjoining the pay-offices are the various waiting-rooms for the passengers, and other offices connected with the carrying department of the railway. The first-class waiting-room is very elegantly and commodiously fitted up, and the first impulse of the visitor is to exclaim, that it would be scarcely a hardship to have to spend an hour by that cheerful fire, while he rested on the inviting cushions of the surrounding couches. The second and third-class waiting-room is also a handsome and well finished apartment, the fine grain of the beautiful material of the tables and of the wood work being